UT's Campus Environmental Center puts on Earth Day Carnival with different campus organizations

Marta Montoya attempts to arrange herbs by their correct name at the UT Micro Farm table of the Earth Day Carnival on Speedway on Monday afternoon. UT Micro Farm was only one of many campus organizations supporting sustainability present at the event.

Photo Credit: Jorge Corona | Daily Texan Staff

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By Matthew Hart

Efforts to increase sustainability and conserve energy on campus were on display with the help of a bicycle-powered smoothie machine at this year’s Earth Day Carnival on Monday.

Numerous student organizations and UT departments celebrated the day with games, prizes and tutorials about conservation and sustainability on campus. Faith Shin, director of the Campus Environmental Center and psychology senior, the center wanted to have different organizations together to showcase sustainability efforts on campus and the greater Austin area in honor of Earth Day.

“It’s a great way to promote environmental awareness,” Shin said. “Some of these activities are just for fun and others are more educational. UT Micro Farm is identifying herbs and giving away food to those who correctly identify them.”
Jane Vinogradova, sustainability chairwoman for the Student Engineering Council and biomedical engineering senior, said she tries to make sure the council is present at important events like Earth Day Carnival.

“Our idea was to make canvas bags that people could personalize and decorate,” Vinogradova said.

Whoever jumped rope the longest in one of the event’s games won a reusable duffle bag.

Petroleum engineering sophomore Naitik Singh said she beat the high score for the duffle bag.

“It’s interesting to see all of these departments and organizations making the effort to promote sustainability with their own ingenuity,” Singh said.

Other campus organizations and departments at the carnival included the Division of Housing and Food Services, Energy Stewardship Program and the Bridging Disciplines Program.

Stephanie Perrone, building energy and resource steward for the University’s Facilities Services, said the energy resource and conservation program came out to tell students about the program, which was created about a year ago.

“Our goal is to reduce energy and water consumption on campus by 20 percent by the year 2020,” Perrone said. “We do that by working directly with building occupants and building operators to maximize efficiencies of the systems.”

Sustainability academics assistant manager Alice Gerhart said the office of sustainability works on the program side to increase the amount of sustainability being taught on campus.

“Making the effort to live in a way that is eco-friendly and environmentally aware is what this event is about,” Gerhart said. “Small steps to promote sustainability are what we’re trying to do.”